

Message Text

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PAGE 01 BOGOTA 03653 221518Z

46

ACTION SS-25

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R 221325Z APR 75

FM AMEMBASSY BOGOTA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 8235

C O N F I D E N T I A L BOGOTA 3653

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EXDIS

E O 11652 GDS

TAGS PFOR PN CO

SUBJ: FORNMIN'S COMMENTS ON PANAMA CANAL NEGOTIATIONS

1. FORNMIN LIEVANO TOLD ME THAT WHILE HE WAS IN PANAMA FOLLOWING HIS VISIT TO WASHINGTON, HE DISCUSSED WITH TORRIJOS AND TACK THE PROBLEM OF DURATION OF THE CANAL TREATY AND THE DURATION OF US DEFENSE OF THE CANAL. HE SAID THAT HE WAS CONVINCED THAT PANAMA WOULD RECEIVED SYMPATHETICALLY ANY US PROPOSAL TO SEPARATE THE TWO THINGS, AND THAT THE GOP WOULD ACCEPT A DEFENSE ARRANGEMENT LONGER THAN 25 YEARS IF IT COULD BE IN SEPARATE FORM, SUCH AS A "MUTUAL DEFENSE AGREEMENT", OR STATUS OF FORCES AGREEMENT OR SOME SUCH ARRANGEMENT AS WAS DISCUSSED BY THE SECY DURING THE LUNCHEON APR 8. HE WAS MORE CONVINCED THAN EVER THAT THE YEAR 2000 IS STILL AN EMOTIONAL "MAGIC NUMBER" AS FAR AS PANAMA IS CONCERNED, AND THAT THE GOP COULD NOT RPT NOT AGREE TO A CANAL (AS DISTINCT FROM DEFENSE) AGREEMENT THAT EXTENDED TO THE YEAR 2000. IN GENERAL HE FELT THE PANAMANIAN'S FULLY UNDERSTOOD OUR PROBLEMS AND WERE DESIROUS OF MOVING QUICKLY TO CONCLUDE THE TREATY THIS YEAR, EVEN THOUGH THEY RECOGNIZE THAT RATIFICATION WILL BE A PROBLEM FOR US AND MAY TAKE LONGER.

2. THE MIN REPEATED HOW IMPRESSED HE WAS WITH HOW QUICKLY THE SECY ZEROED IN ON THE DEFENSE-DURATION PROBLEM IN THE BRIEF EXCHANGE AT THE LUNCHEON. IT SHOWED, HE SAID, IMAGINATION AND AUDACITY, AND PROVED THAT THE SECY'S REPUTATION AS A SUPERB
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NEGOTIATOR WAS WELL MERITED. VAKY

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